

OUR SOCIAL CHAT

All letters intended for this department should be addressed to "Aunt Jennie," care of The Progressive Farmer, Raleigh, N. C.

Aunt Jennie's Letter.

So many have requested me to write an article on canning that I feel as if I must comply this week. How many of you canned cherries for pies next winter and made strawberry preserves? Have you put up any huckleberries or blackberries? They are so nice and convenient for winter use, besides being ready for pies in the early spring before other fruits ripen. Be sure to make blackberry jelly and don't forget to put up a lot of jam, for it is so good for the little people and is much relished by the grown-ups. Invalids enjoy the jelly and it is never harmful. By the way, have you tried to make any "old-field" plum jelly? Try it and see how pretty it is and what a delicate flavor it has.

I think that we appreciate the blackberry less than we should. It may be, and is, I expect, because it grows wild in such profusion, and some people say, you know, that the things you must pay for are those you always like. It may be so, but those of us who have picked them from the bushes know that they cost time and scratches, if not money.

If you will kindly look in your file of Progressive Farmers for 1903, the issue of July 21, you will find "Hints on Canning," which article describes minutely the old and much-used method of canning, viz., boiling the fruit in the cans after having strewn the bottom of the larger vessel containing water with small nails to prevent the heat from cracking the jars. Well, they say that "everybody's way does," but if I had to do my canning in that way, we would not have many canned things at our house, as it is entirely too much trouble, besides being too risky to fruit and jars.

The chief points in canning is to have perfect fruit, a good fire, and clean jars with new rubber for each jar. I find that it pays to purchase new rubbers every season; they cost so little and are really essential, as they exclude the air when properly adjusted, and we know that unless that is done, our trouble is for nothing and time and money both wasted.

If I had the lady members of the Circle here I could demonstrate to them in a short while my method of canning, and they would see for themselves how easily it is done; but I find it rather difficult to explain on paper. I lose no fruit and have broken no jars in several years, so I will try to tell you how to save yours. I use a porcelain kettle and sometimes cook half bushel of fruit at one time. Have all your jars thoroughly cleansed, fit the rubbers and tops, test them by filling with water and turning them upside down to see if any leak. If they do, try another rubber, and if it persists in leaking set it aside, for if used your fruit is gone. Invert the jars on table near the stove, laying the top and rubber by each jar. Provide a small high

box (I find a bushel crate light and convenient, as it is nearly as high as the stove). Draw fresh cold water and have a large vessel filled. Get a clean flour sack (or cloth which, when doubled will be the size of one), and you are ready for work. Let the fruit be as done as you wish, but be sure it is boiling when you begin to fill the jars. I use a small tea cup for filling, as it wastes no fruit and in dipping you get enough of the juice. Wet the cloth, lay one end on the box, set jar on it, then wrap the wet cloth all around the jar until you have all the glass covered. Dip half cup of fruit, place your open hand over the mouth of the jar, and hear it hiss while you count six, then remove your hand and proceed to fill the jar at once. When full, adjust rubber and top and screw on tightly; then invert the filled jar on the table to cool and the deed is done. Before filling the next jar, be sure to have the wrapping cloth wrung, cooled and rewet.

Will some reader who is successful in canning corn please send her recipe, also some one who has canned okra? When canning tomatoes, don't forget to put a pinch of salt in the top of each jar as this enhances the flavor. He who must buy everything find that it pays to can things, and you who can have so many things in summer without money, can make it pay you doubly. Try it.

We have an unusually good lot of letters this week. Next week I shall tell you the story of that other North Carolina pioneer woman, Charlotte Robertson, of Northampton County.

AUNT JENNIE.

Advice to Young Men in Search of Business Positions.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—Some of us boys are now looking for jobs or work. Some are college graduates, some are not. Some say, "I will not work for less than two dollars per day;" some say, "If I can just get enough to live on at the start, I will be satisfied."

It is this latter class which will succeed. The young men who make their salary the primary object in seeking work are too often let pass by. But when a young college man applies for work with some manufacturing company, and the president asks him, "What price will you work for?" and his reply is, "Try me and see what I am worth to you, and pay me accordingly." This young man is very likely to get work, and receive about thirty dollars per month, instead of seventy-five as he had counted on before he left college.

And right here is where too many get discouraged—this beginning on a small salary. And often two-thirds of them work a few months and quit. But the remnant hold on; they are those young men from the farm who know nothing but to work and to do that the best they can, and are satisfied with small pay. In a couple of years their salaries are doubled and many of the first who dropped out stand off amazed at such a one's

success and wonder how he has done so well, and why the company should "take on" to a country boy like that.

Now, what I mean to say is this: Whoever you are, if you want to be a man, go to work with a good firm, for whatever you can get. The firm will soon need a man to do something better than what they start you at, and you will soon see things staring you in the face, and call for a man, and then all you will need to meet this new position is manhood, and if you have any manhood about you, your superiors will soon see it. And just as fast as your work will admit, your salary will be increased, and soon you will have an enviable reputation and good position.

So don't be afraid to work, and don't grumble about your pay.

With best wishes to all,

SEARCH WARD.

Harnett Co., N. C.

Our Friends, the Birds.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—I was glad to read in the last week's issue of The Progressive Farmer, a letter written by Thomas Albert Pope, in defense of our friends, the birds. The letter was on a well-chosen subject and one that should command the attention, not only of the boys of North Carolina, but of every citizen who has the best interests of our State at heart.

The question whether or not our birds shall be protected, is one on the decision of which largely depends whether or not we are going on from year to year paying a constantly increasing percentage of our vegetable wealth to the insects. The earth and air is teeming with life. Myriads of insects swarm in the air, bore into the bark of our trees, or burrow in the earth, all dependent for their existence on some form of vegetable life. About a dozen different species of beetles, all of them very tiny, cause an annual loss of from \$15,000,000 to \$20,000,000 by the damage they do in the forests of the country east of the Rocky Mountains. The beetles burrow in the bark of the trees for the purpose of excavating galleries in which to deposit their eggs. When the grubs are hatched, the latter bore numerous tunnels on their own account, injuring the wood and killing the trees.

The new Year Book of the Department of Agriculture has an extensive article on the protection of our forests from the destructive ravages of these insects. This problem will become simpler when we have solved the problem of taking care of our birds. One-tenth of our entire agricultural product is each year a total loss through the ravages of insects. This percentage is constantly on the increase, mainly because of the loss of our birds.

In America there are about nine hundred different species of birds, three hundred and fifteen of these being found in North Carolina. Three-fourths of all these birds feed almost entirely upon insects. A bird's heart beats more than twice

as fast as the human heart, and to keep up such an enormous activity, a bird must have a great deal of the most nourishing kinds of food. The average insect-eating bird eats more than its own weight every day. Robins have been known to eat as much as forty-six per cent over their own weight.

The downy wood-pecker (often wrongly called a sap-sucker) is one of our great insect destroyers. He is not sucking the sap from the trees when he drills holes in the outer bark; he is hunting for and eating numberless beetles, grubs and larvae. By eating these he saves many trees that would otherwise be destroyed. Of the four species of wood-peckers that are common in North Carolina, there is in reality only one that is a sap-sucker. He is a Northern bird and spends his winters only in the South. He is readily distinguished by his red head and red throat.

The old barred owl, thought much abused and accused, does the farmer a very real service in destroying field mice, rabbits, grasshoppers, etc. He is really a harmless enough old fellow, and only carries off an occasional fat fowl for a midnight feast or for his Sunday dinner. The mocking-bird, that nightingale of the South, is another of our insect destroyers, but with his marvelous gift of song he is amply able to protect himself, almost even from bean-shooters and air rifles in the hands of the blood-thirsty small boy.

It is a sad but a well-known fact that the women in our State, as well as elsewhere, play no small part in the wholesale destruction of our birds. Of the many species of birds that are rapidly becoming extinct because they are sacrificed to woman's vanity may be mentioned the American egret. This is a beautiful snow-white bird that nests in marshes along the coast. During the nesting season it has about fifty straight plumes growing between the scapulars. These plumes are very beautiful and are much sought to make the aigrettes that ornament many hats. Hunters visit the marshes, where colonies of these birds are rearing their young. The old birds are killed for the plumes, and hundreds of the young birds are left to starve and rot in the nests.

So long as women demand the plumage of birds for personal adornment, so long will an attempt be made to meet that demand, so long will God's law continue to be broken until our meadows and woodlands may become silent and our hills no longer echo the notes of the feathered songsters.

VAUGHN WHITE.

Alamance Co., N. C.

The United States Government has at last coined all the silver bullion purchased years ago under the Sherman Act. Says Director Roberts: "No, there will never be another new silver dollar turned out by the government mint plants, unless, by some chance, a 16 to 1 Congress should be elected; for the supply of silver bullion purchased under the Sherman act is exhausted."